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Agenda item 116 (b)
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Afghanistan, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay: draft resolution

Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, as well as its subsequent resolutions on the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,

Considering that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace and enrich the cultural heritage of society as a whole in the States in which such persons live,

Concerned by the frequency and severity of disputes and conflicts concerning minorities in many countries and their often tragic consequences, and concerned also that persons belonging to minorities are particularly vulnerable to displacement through, *inter alia*, population transfers, refugee flows and forced relocation,

Acknowledging that the United Nations has an increasingly important role to play regarding the protection of minorities by, *inter alia*, taking due account of and giving effect to the Declaration,

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Noting that the Working Group on Minorities of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Commission on Human Rights held its fourth and fifth sessions from 25 to 29 May 1998[1] and 25 to 31 May 1999,[2] respectively,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[3]

2. *Reaffirms* the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law, in accordance with the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;

3. *Urges* States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as set out in the Declaration, including through the facilitation of their participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society and in the economic progress and development of their country;

4. *Also urges* States to take, as appropriate, all the necessary constitutional, legislative, administrative and other measures to promote and give effect to the Declaration;

5. *Recognizes* that respect for human rights and the promotion of understanding and tolerance by Governments as well as between and among minorities are central to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

6. *Appeals* to States to make bilateral and multilateral efforts, as appropriate, in order to protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in their countries, in accordance with the Declaration;

7. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to make available, at the request of Governments concerned, qualified expertise on minority issues, including the prevention and resolution of disputes, to assist in existing or potential situations involving minorities;

8. *Calls upon* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote, within her mandate, the implementation of the Declaration and to continue to engage in a dialogue with Governments concerned for that purpose;

9. *Requests* the High Commissioner to continue her efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation among United Nations programmes and agencies on activities related to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and to take the work of relevant regional organizations active in the field of human rights into account in her endeavours;

10. *Calls upon* the High Commissioner to resume inter-agency consultations with United Nations programmes and agencies on minority issues, and urges those programmes and agencies to contribute actively to this process;

11. *Encourages* intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue to contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

12. *Calls upon* the Working Group on Minorities of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to further implement its mandate with the involvement of a wide range of participants;

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[1] E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/18.

[2] E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/21.

[3] A/54/303.

13. *Invites* the High Commissioner to seek voluntary contributions to facilitate the effective participation, including through training seminars, in the work of the Working Group on Minorities of representatives of non-governmental organizations and persons belonging to minorities, in particular those from developing countries;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution, including on good practices in the fields of education and the effective participation of minorities in decision-making processes;

15. *Decides* to continue consideration of this question at its fifty-sixth session under the item "Human rights questions".